

Nimuendajá: The Tukuna

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181 there are no Tukuna who sit around all week eating just bananas is because they
461 like, above all, to eat fish, which obliges them to go fishing almost every day;
sometimes the catch is small. Again, once in awhile, they wish to eat game, which
they can obtain only by extensive trips through the country.

462 The husband must clear the undergrowth and burn it for his plantation. The
house needs repairs, and his weapons and fishing tackle require constant attention.
He cuts and sews the clothes for his family, with remarkable ability, makes a
canoe for his own use or to sell at a good price, and helps his wife weed the garden,
make farinha, and fetch kindling or fruits from the jungle. The wife, who must
take care of the children and kitchen, clean the house and clothing, spin tucum
thread, make hammocks or baskets or pottery, obviously has no time for swinging
in a hammock either. Furthermore, many take enormous pleasure in their planta-
tions, spending the better part of the day there.

192 That the Tukuna are neither intellectually lazy nor obtuse in understanding is
177 proved by the many alien culture elements which they have adopted and assimilated
with real advantage to themselves: first, the ubá of the Omágua, then the
casco of the Neobrazilians, in place of the small, primitive canoe of paxiuba
barriguda; the mosquito net and subsequent modification of the house; the manu-
facture of manioc flour, which gives them an appreciable income; clothing, which
is a necessity in a land infested by mosquitoes; firearms, sewing machines, and
many other items of lesser importance.

All in all, most members of the tribe at least are free from that snobbishness
which impels some Indians thoughtlessly to ape the Neobrazilians and to depre-
cate their own traditions. The Tukuna have preserved the purity of their own
language, having adopted not more than two dozen words from the Portuguese,
and there is no evidence of bastardization or decadence in the grammar.

The puberty ceremonies with their complicated ritual still persist today, and
moiety exogamy continues to be rigorously maintained. Similarly, the religion of
the Tukuna in its fundamental concepts has been kept free of Christian influence.
This is why the Tukuna have survived to this day as a numerous tribe, with their
own ethnic characteristics, whereas all the other tribes that were formerly their
neighbors have disappeared.

Visits

574 In spite of their rebellious individualism, their occasional choleric outbreaks, and
484 their constant fear of witchcraft, the Tukuna are far from being unsociable folk.
Reciprocal visits are extremely frequent, and invitations to festive reunions are
at times so numerous that the recipient with the best will in the world cannot
attend them all. An Indian may suddenly feel the desire to visit an acquaintance,
friend, or relative, frequently one who dwells a few days' canoe journey away. He
loads his mosquito net, some tururi cloth, and clothing into a burden basket,
placing it in the canoe, together with a hamper of farinha, a cooking pot, some
gourds, and his fishing gear, and covering it all with a mat of banana leaves
(Pl. 4.) Finally, the family also embarks—the dog, the parrot, and the tiny
574 monkey, too—and they voyage forth through the igarapés, sinks, and lakes. When
576 nearing the house of the person to whom the visit is being paid, the traveler
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announces his coming by the sound of his paddling, the strokes of which can be heard from afar. He then draws his canoe inshore but remains seated in it for about half an hour, without glancing at the house, while the host pays him not the slightest attention. Only later do visitor and host approach each other, the former bringing his baggage to the house, in which there is always enough room for him to be lodged without the slightest inconvenience to the inmates. 574 576 [484]

Formerly, the guest was accorded a type of martial reception, which Marcoy describes. When a visitor entered a house, all the men present seized their spears, pointing them toward the newcomer and pretending to bar the way. The guest, however, knowing the meaning of this procedure, pushed the weapons aside with his hands, entered, and seated himself in the first hammock. The owner of the house then asked: "Who art thou? Friend or enemy? Whence comest thou? What dost thou wish?" The answer was easily given, since the visitor had only come to trade and so forth. They say that in Peru this form of reception is still practiced.

The visit customarily lasts several days or even weeks, but does not grow burdensome to the host, since the guests bring all they need with which to provide their own food by hunting or fishing. More often than not, the owner of the house shares his meals with the visitors, who do likewise with the host's family.

FESTIVALS

Gatherings by special invitation to selected individuals have much more social and economic importance than personal visits have, whether these guests are invited to participate in collective tasks of major importance—clearing a plantation, preparing house thatch, making preparations for great feasts, such as the puberty feast—or to take part in one of the ceremonies of painting and name bestowal, hair plucking and perforation of ears and septum, haircutting, change of voice in youths, first menstruation, or some similar occasion. We have already noted (p. 13) that the thatch trimming of a new house is also carried out with festivities. 574 476

Labor festivals.—There is a large class of ceremonies for which the guests arrive in the morning, receive a meal and gourds of drink from the hosts, then all go out together to work. That night they drink, dance, and sing until the following day. These gatherings, which are entirely profane, are called *vayuri'* (uajuri, ajuri) or *pē'ta*. The first of these terms, *vayuri'*, is an alteration of the Portuguese word for assistance, *ajuda*, which passed into the lingua geral to designate these gatherings for communal work without payment; the second, *pē'ta*, is the Portuguese word for party, *festa*, pronounced in the Tukuna manner. This suggests that the Tukuna did not have this institution before contact with the Neobrazilians, among whom it is in great vogue; but one must also consider the possibility that it was already known by the Tukuna, who only adopted the present form and the Portuguese terminology. 476 574 527 [177]

Rites of passage.—The rites of passage have, however, a religious basis and are great ceremonies; the generic designation is *dyeji'*. Sometimes more than three hundred persons are present at these, and the celebration with its concomitant drinking lasts for three days and three nights. The *vayuri'* as well as the *dyeji'* are above all drinking bouts, not banquets. 881 574 796 [273]

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835 word of the crime and sent someone to investigate. Learning this, Abilio voluntarily
 684 went to Belém to declare that he was the killer. His explanation that "they lived
 648 like dogs" was no reason at all to the Neobrazilians, who did not understand "so he returned home. A few days later the subprefect of police ordered his arrest: but after several days he was released, to the great satisfaction of the Indians of Tacana, who were said to have been determined to free him by force. As a matter of fact, after all this, Joaquim tauaru' did appear to me to be mentally unbalanced when I encountered him. The Indians said that he had already acquired the nature of a dog: one girl, who watched him from a hiding place, observed that he dug the earth with his fingernails like a dog!

[732]

LAW

685 *Crimes.*—I have never heard of theft occurring among the compound families characteristic of Tukuna local groupings, but it does happen away from their confines, even among fellow tribesmen. The person robbed, eventually aided by his relatives, deals personally with the thief. Willful thieves cannot hope for very gentle treatment on the part of the victims. A certain nai'a'k] of Igarapé de Belém broke into a trunk during the owner's absence, stealing the contents, but was surprised and forced to return everything. Some time later he repeated the misdeed in another house, but not so cleverly as to avoid suspicion of robbery. Since nai'a' obatinately refused to return his loot, the victim promptly shot him; but the wound was not fatal.

574 The great majority of crimes involving death or injury take place during the
 674 work parties and celebrations, being due to drunkenness. As I have already indicated, they are almost always without a serious motive, simply because alcohol in certain Tukuna, arouses not the sexual instinct but the desire to quarrel, which is directed most of the time against their own relatives. A fight at Igarapé da Roca that ended with the death of one person and the wounding of two began with insults which an Indian for no apparent reason hurled at his father. Strangely numerous are the quarrels among drunken brothers-in-law. Could this be some a priori subconscious hostile feeling against the intrusion of another clan into the family? Moreover, in the language of the Guaraní, who have no such clan organization as the Tukuna, the word for brother-in-law, *toyayá(ra)*, means also "competitor," and the verb *ahovayá* means "to be against."

672 In any case, as I have already explained, the Tukuna appear to consider drunkenness an extenuating circumstance, which absolves the criminal almost completely
 273 of responsibility. This point of view appears in the lack of concern about such incidents: "He was soused!" they say, and that is the end of it. Even a murdered man's own relatives, at first naturally enraged, gradually accept this point of view, which they would never do if the crime were committed in cold blood." However, a certain aversion to the slayer always remains, and if he is so imprudent as to glory in the deed, the relatives of the victim may still have a sudden and violent reaction and seek revenge. It is, however, true that a killing by a drunken man will not per se provoke reprisal.

* See pp. 106 ff. for the story of the execution of an evil shaman.

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881 e) A girl was in seclusion; a feast was about to be celebrated. Aside from her, there was no one
 773 in the house. In the kitchen there lay beneath a cover on the platform (giráu) all the smoked
 539 game for the feast. Suddenly, through a crack in the wall of her room, the varëkj observed a
 smoked monkey descend from the platform. Seizing a blowgun, it began to dance with this up
 and down the kitchen. Then a roasted sloth also clambered down, going first to the fireplace to
 warm itself, then it searched for the rattle stick, which was already prepared for the feast, and
 in its turn began to dance to and fro. After some time both returned to the platform.

As soon as her mother returned to the house, the varëkj told her what she had seen. The mother
 went to the smoked meat on the platform, examined the sloth, and, seeing that it was dirty with
 ashes, believed what her daughter had told her. "Nothing like this has ever happened before; I
 believe that you are going to die!" she said to her daughter. And sure enough, the following
 morning the girl lay dead in her seclusion room.

342 Formerly, a small room, na-pi'i^a (pl. 11, a) was made for the girl as soon as
 881 possible, against the east wall of the house if she belonged to moiety A, against
 [616] the west wall if she belonged to moiety B. This little retreat was circular, two
 meters in diameter or a little more, and had no floor, since the varëkj sleeps in her
 hammock throughout her seclusion. The walls are made of long, white strips of
 burity, tied with cipó firmly together in horizontal bands. These extend from the
 floor to the roof thatch, where their tips are bent toward the front. On the left side
 [225] (looking at the room) there is a door, closed by a kind of hanging mat made from
 burity frondstalks set in a horizontal position and held firm by two vertical rods.
 Often today the seclusion room is square and is not erected where it should be,
 because the position of the house on the banks of the Solimões or igapó does not
 permit it. In general, to make such a room, people are called together for a work
 [476] party (uajuri) to which, above all, members of the clans of the varëkj's moiety are
 invited.

881 *Preparations for the feast.*—The preparations for the feast which now begins
 may take more than two months, sometimes requiring even one or two more work
 parties. Nowadays, what really delays completion of the preparations is the diffi-
 [136] culty of collecting a sufficient quantity of smoked game for the number of guests;
 game is now rare in the country (p. 26), and even fish are not caught easily.

The game is roasted on a forked grill, first in the jungle and later in the kitchen.
 [252] where it is then stored on its own large, covered platform. When the last pieces
 arrive, the first are already desiccated to the point where they more or less re-
 semble charred wood. At the same time, the women prepare alcoholic drinks, of
 [273] which a sufficient quantity is required not only for the feast itself but also for the
 preliminary work party. In the meantime the date of the celebration must be
 calculated, so that the invitations may be issued.

881 *Invitations.*—Two invitations are given for any celebration: the first advising
 574 of the approximate time with relation to the phase of the moon ("in the first full
 moon"), the other fixing the exact day that the ceremony begins. Feasts are pre-
 ferably held during the full moon, not because any magical influence is attributed
 to it but simply because it is much more agreeable to have the house and yard of
 the ceremony flooded with moonlight than plunged in darkness.

881 Invitations are delivered personally by the host, that is, by the varëkj's father
 574 or by a person especially charged by him. The messenger travels from house to
 202 house informing the residents that the celebration is drawing near and that the

host suggests the bringing of *maaka*, *tucum fibers*, and so forth. These trips 574 ●
generally take two days, and only persons with whom the *vorëkj*'s family maintain 881
good relations receive an invitation. A Tucuna will rarely dare to come uninvited. 202

In general, the definite invitations are given on the eve of the festivities,
usually simultaneously by messengers in two canoes, one going upstream, the
other downstream. Each man carries a large bark horn, *bu'/bu* (see p. 42), [534]
covered with banana leaves to conceal it from the glances of women and children
when the canoe touches shore. Blowing this instrument, the sound of which may
be heard from afar, the messengers travel from one house to another, telling the
owner the exact day and hour (by the sun's position) when the ceremony is to
start, and ascertaining the prospective attendance or absence of the invited guest.

Final arrangements.—While the guests are preparing *maaka*, *tucum fibers*, small 881
drums, and festive attire in their homes, the final arrangements are being made at
the host's house. At the quarter of the house where the *vorëkj*'s seclusion room is
erected, outside the house a corral is made, consisting of two thatched walls, higher
than a man, perpendicular to the house wall (pl. 17, c). The distance between the 881
walls, which are about 12 m. long, is about 7 m. in this enclosure, called *ta'/k|-pi'i* 534
(*ta'/k|*, a ceremonial musical instrument, see below; *pi'i*, enclosure) various cere-
monies are carried out with the *vorëkj*. She has access to it through a small door
which, except for these occasions, is firmly lashed to the house wall. During the
festivities the musical instruments are kept in the enclosure at night.

A cleared path extends from this corral to a spot on the bank of the river or
igarapé several hundred meters from the house, where the musical instruments
and the statues used in the ceremony are kept in water during the day, to prevent
the former from drying out and to conceal the latter from the uninitiated. From
nightfall on, only the persons in charge of the ceremonial instruments may fre-
quent this path, as the host expressly advises the guests. The yard is cleaned and 881
enlarged, and the other paths are closed off by poles, except one that remains open
for the necessities of the guests. A large platform about 2 m. high is constructed
inside the house for the smoked meat; it is to the right of the seclusion room. The
jars, water jugs, sieves, and gourds remain near the door to the left side of the
retreat. The outside surface of the wall of the seclusion room (inside the house) [353]
is decorated with paintings, that is, bands or crisscross designs composed of tri-
angles, rhomboids, and circles. In one of these quarters is painted the figure of a
deer, the symbol of vigilance. At the top there is always a sun with a conven-
tionalized human face, a star, and a new moon. Apparently, these four designs
were the only ones painted in the old days, but today the wall is filled with less
traditional figures. A photograph of such a wall, taken by a Capuchin missionary,
shows a watch, machetes, a tent, a soldier, a woman, and so on; I myself have
observed paintings of steamships and airplanes, because nowadays any guest may
take advantage of the smooth, white wall to paint whatever comes into his head.

All objects are removed from the floor of the house and are piled on top of the
dwelling platform, where the inmates accommodate themselves so as to leave the
greatest possible space for the free movement of the guests and for the ceremonies.

* These persons are called *ácc'-tani* (*ácc'*, demon) or *ta'/k|-tanj* (*ta'/k|*, ceremonial instrument, described below).

881 *Beginning of the ceremony.*—By this time, if not before, the paternal uncle of the present or prospective vorëkj has assumed his function as director of the ceremony, called vorëkj-ëpji', "drink of the girl." Sometimes he hangs his hammock next to the front wall of the seclusion room, since he is responsible for the girl. He is aided by his wife and the vorëkj's mother, and by other relatives if necessary, in serving the drinks. The girl's father takes no part in the ceremony that directly concerns her person; the guests are his responsibility.

881 *The arrival of the guests.*—In the afternoon the first canoe bringing guests draws up to the feast house. If the guest is someone of importance, the owner of the house, beating his drum and accompanied by some members of the family, who strike the rattle stick on the ground, goes to the door to receive and conduct the visitor. The guest goes up to the house, with long tucum fibers trailing down behind his back. His costume, if he has one, remains concealed in the canoe. Some time later, his wife also goes up, with the burden basket and the children, to hang up the hammocks in the feast house in the place indicated by the hosts. The recent arrivals greet all those who are already in the house with: "Nu'ma!", and all respond with the same word. Everyone is daubed with genipapo on the face, the women more liberally than the men (fig. 10), and the savage appearance that this paint gives to the features often contrasts strangely with the civilized clothing and the perfume flask, the neck of which protrudes from the coat pocket.

Fig. 10. Facial paint (genipapo) for a ceremony.



The sides of the house are filled with hammocks and baggage, but the center remains free for the dance and the ceremonies. The men, almost all of whom carry their carved and painted dance staves (see p. 41) and their own small drums, seat themselves on long benches, which are customarily placed at the edge of the central space. Here the "uncle" of the vorëkj first gives them a swallow of paiauarú brew in a small gourd and then afterward serves the paiauarú proper in a large gourd.

881 *The beginning of the dance.*—Soon some arise, place the dance staves across their shoulders, hang the little drums on the lower tips, and, hitting the drums with a measured beat, begin to march by twos and threes in single file around the margin of the central space. They are preceded by the owner of the house with his drum, or by some other member of the family who occasionally takes over, it being a question of honor for the players not to stop the drumbeat once the ceremony has started. Thus passes the eve of the celebration.

881 *Preparation for dressing the girl.*—After midnight, about two or three o'clock in the morning, the vorëkj ceremony begins with the preparation of genipapo dye with which to decorate her, and also of white tururí for her costume. A basket containing some forty genipapo fruits is placed in the center of the house, together with a scraper, some leaves of a plant called nu'u (Aroidea ?), two muirapiranga mallets, and two sticks of white tururí, 2.5 m. long and 5 cm. thick. Half a meter below the upper tip of these a circular furrow is cut in the bark.

apart, which is correlated with their lack of social organization other than blood ties. When drunk they quarrel and often cause injuries and death. In their dealings with the Neo-Brazilians, both parties exhibit their worst qualities. Nevertheless, the Tucuna are not unsociable and frequently visit one another and hold festive meetings, when they work collectively for their host. They retain tenaciously their original spiritual culture, although hard work has brought important material improvements. They now have good firearms, tools, clothes, and sewing machines, and they live in financial independence. Some, however, enticed to industrial establishments (rum factories) of the civilized people, become proletarian and then degenerate.

Moieties and clans.—The Tucuna are divided into two exogamous, unnamed patrilineal moieties, associated respectively with the east and west. One has 15 unlocalized, patrilineal sibs with tree names; the other has 21 sibs with bird names. Neither the clans nor moieties have outward distinguishing features, except for the private use of certain musical instruments on ceremonial occasions. There is no clear relationship between clan members and their eponym, except that a person's name refers obscurely to certain qualities of the animal or plant, thus revealing his clan. A person is named by his maternal relatives the day after his birth.

The Tucuna maintain moiety exogamy with strict inflexibility, and in 1941 still punished violations with death. They regard incest as a sin against the goddess Taé, who punishes it by making one insane during his life and by annihilating his soul after his death.

LIFE CYCLE

Birth and childhood.—After coitus, conception depends on Taé, who gives a soul to children. Abortion and infanticide are practiced, especially when the father is a Neo-Brazilian, as the child would be disqualified for sib and moiety membership. Otherwise, it is believed that infanticide is a sin and that Taé punishes the soul of the perpetrator after death.

Childbirth takes place in a temporary shelter prepared in the bush near the house. The newborn child is immediately painted with genipa. Both parents are confined and diet until the umbilical cord drops off. Children are carried in a woven cotton sling passing over a shoulder. Slings are double in part, so that a child sits in one portion while the other supports its back.

When a child begins to crawl, there is a feast in which it is painted with urucú and covered with bits of parrot feathers while the paint is still sticky. At another feast, formerly celebrated when the child was 2 but now when it is 4, its hair is pulled out and its ears pierced. Contrary to certain authors, this operation does not endanger a child's life. About 8 months later there is a supplementary feast when the hair, having grown again, is trimmed, and the relics of the previous feast are burned.

861 More than among other tribes, *Tucuna* children receive corporal punishment, especially with the external application of nettle flowers that are grown for this purpose at the edge of the yard. They play with dolls carved of muirapiranga, figures of animals, little canoes, small bows and arrows, and buzz-disks of gourd shells.

173 Boys' puberty observances.—There is a tradition that in former times, young men were initiated when their voices changed, being secluded and then perhaps formally admitted to the secrets of the megaphone (*tá/ki*) through an application of snuff called *ká/vi*, which is still used occasionally.

114 There are no vestiges of homosexuality, as claimed by Tessmann (1930, p. 563).

881 Girls' puberty rites.—At her first menstruation, a girl is secluded in the house loft. This is not so cruel as certain travelers (Bates, 1863, 2:406) proclaim. Every girl submits willingly, convinced that her peculiar condition requires it and that its omission would be dangerous, as she is surrounded by invisible "immortals" and demons, who seek contact with her and at times cause extraordinary supernatural experiences. Many stories told to a girl in seclusion illustrate this dangerous state.

[342] The people hasten to prepare for the girl a circular seclusion room adjacent to the east or west wall of the house, according to her moiety. [532] They decorate the walls with painted bands and lines, and figures of the sun, moon, morning star, and deer, the last a symbol of vigilance and not a "totem."

[262] Preparations for the feast sometimes require months. They prepare roast meat and beverages and make the house ready. The girl's father is host, but her paternal uncle and his wife direct all ceremonies concerning her person, being wholly responsible for her. Friends and acquaintances receive two invitations to the feast; the second, which specifies the date, is issued to the sound of the bark trumpet, which is carried hidden in the canoe.

[534] In the exterior portion of the house, corresponding to the girl's seclusion room, a long fence is made with straw walls to conceal the megaphone (*tá/ki*), its statues, and the bark trumpet which operate behind it each night of the feast and are removed before daybreak and hidden underwater in the creek. People are chosen and invited to operate these instruments by the head of the house when the time comes; there is no permanent assignment. Inside the fence of the megaphone, snuff (*ká/vi*) or tobacco powder is taken with several ingredients (but not *parica*). The snuff is kept in a snail shell and blown into the nose by means of an apparatus made of a tubular bone and two quills of royal sparrow hawk feathers, or by means of a simple taboca (bamboo) tube. Boys of 7 or older customarily are given snuff, after which they may see and touch the instruments within the fence, which are taboo to women and to boys who have not yet had it.

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PERU.

222 mock On parting we gave the man some fish-hooks and the woman a pair of scissors which had been notched by long use. This liberality procured from the pair a torrent of thanks from the depths of their throats, besides a present of part of the bananas they had gathered.

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609 We stopped successively at several Ticuna huts, where, without other payment than a trifle gracefully presented to the proprietors, we ate, drank, slept, and collected musical pipes, drums, necklaces, bracelets, coronets, pompons, crests, and other baubles representing the wealth of the country, of which a Parisian bourgeois would have envied us the possession to decorate the walls of his villa at Asnières or Pantin.

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000 The information we obtained on our journey concerning the manners and customs of the Ticunas is limited to the subjoined details. If we do not preface them with any notice of the antecedents of these natives, it is because the thread which connects their present with their past is too slight to sustain a dissertation.

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The Ticuna nation, mention of whom occurs as far back as the seventeenth century, occupied, at the time when Pedro Teixeira ascended the river, the space on the left bank comprised between the rivers Ambiacu and Atacoari. On the north its territory was bounded by the Pehua and Yabua Indians; on the east by the Yuris of the river Ica; and on the west by the Orejones of the river Napo. These territorial limits remain still the same, only the numerical strength of the Ticunas is no longer commensurate with the extent of country they formerly occupied. Subjugated, re-subjugated, and catechised in turn by the Portuguese Carmelites and the Spanish Jesuits, who based on the pretensions of their government a claim to the legitimate control of the Ticunas and disputed for possession by force of arms, these natives, already much enfeebled by the contrary influence of the two forces acting upon them during half a century, were repeatedly decimated by the small-pox, that cholera-morbus of the red-skins, which completed the work of the *de Propaganda Fide*. All that now remains of the Ticuna nation forms a population of about one hundred and fifty individuals, all of whom live on the borders of the Atacoari and its two tributaries.¹

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A very odd custom of the Ticunas is the manner in which they receive individuals of another nation than their own. Hardly has such a visitor appeared on the threshold of their hut, than all the Ticunas who may be present seize their lances and present the point at the individual, under pretence of opposing his entrance. The visitor, who is aware that this is only etiquette, thrusts aside with his hand the weapons directed against him, enters the hut and seats himself on the nearest hammock. The majority of the Ticuna huts are provided, like the Brazilian drawing-rooms in the province of Para, with three or four hammocks slung opposite one another. When each hammock is made to swing by its occupant, either to chase the mosquitoes or to cool the air, and all swing together, passing, repassing, and apparently dodging, without ever coming into collision with each other, one might imagine oneself in a lace manufactory with the interminable motion of the bobbins before one's eyes.

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The master of the hut then addresses the stranger, and in the hollow ventriloquial

¹ We speak of the Ticunas who are living wild, and not of those individuals of the same nation who have settled during the last twenty-five years in several of the villages on the Amazon.

NAUTA TO TABATINGA

The master of the hut then addresses the stranger, and in the hollow ³²¹ tones peculiar to the Ticunas, asks, "Who are you?—Where do you come from?—Are you friend or foe?—What brings you here?" The stranger satisfies these inquiries one after the other; or, more frequently, his visit having only a commercial aim, is content to answer by exhibiting the articles he brings, and which he desires to exchange for the products of Ticuna industry. The arms are then cast aside in order to discuss the value of the goods offered and those wanted; it will be readily understood that the discussion is intermingled with numerous requisitions on the *caisuma*. The articles of Ticuna industry consist of yucca-flour, blowing-pipes, hammocks, hunting-poison, and coarse cotton goods. ⁵⁷⁴
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Some young girls with short-cut hair whom we had noticed among the Ticunas led us for a moment to believe that they shared the custom of cropping with the Yahuas; but the information we obtained on this subject disabused us of the notion. The cropped pate of these young girls was only the visible sign of their having attained the age of puberty, and was the complement of the mysterious practice which the tribes of the Plain of Sacramento, and notably the Conibos, call *Schébinnabiqui*. The Ticunas name it *Ihiéboah*, an expression which is less humorous than the other, and which may be translated "young girl," from *ihie*, woman, and *boah*, child. ⁸⁸¹
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After translating the word, it remains to describe the custom itself.

When the matrons find that a female child has attained puberty, they take possession of the young girl, conduct her in a procession to a hut built in a lonely place for the purpose, shut her up in it after providing some food and a vessel of water, and then leave her for forty-eight hours, the victim of *ennui* or her reflections. At the expiration of this time the matrons come to deliver their prisoner; but before giving her complete liberty, they rub her head with the milky juice of a *scus*, which instantaneously coagulates, and forms, under the rotatory motion of the palms of their hands, a multitude of little balls, within which is entangled the hair of the young girl. These little balls, which the matrons snatch away one by one for amusement, tear away the hair with them, and make the patient scream with pain; two musicians, with their backs to the entrance of the hut, play an accompaniment to this proceeding on the flageolet and tambourine. ⁸⁸¹
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When the head of the victim has been thus completely stripped, the women cover it with a hood of yellow feathers, the shape of which reminds one of a species of toadstool (*Boletus*); in the centre of this is fixed a plume of feathers from the tail of the ara. Thus accoutred, the young girl, frightened and crying, is first led round the village, and then conducted in procession to the river-side and the forest, continually followed by the matrons, who whip her roughly with green boughs in order to harden her against the trouble to come. ⁸⁹²
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After several hours of wandering in this manner, and an indefinite number of draughts of *caisuma* which the young girl is forced to drink, they introduce her into a hut where a new hammock has been slung for the purpose. Utterly broken down with fatigue, drunkenness, and the switchings so unsparingly administered, she tumbles into the swinging net and immediately falls into a profound sleep. In the meantime, the assembled nation celebrates, with games and a remarkable consumption of fermented liquor, the *Ihiéboah* fete. ⁸⁷³
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the canoe and rowed vigorously home, and soon laid her insensible husband in a ⁵⁹³hammock.

This heroic act had occurred some two hours only before we arrived at the Ticuna's ⁵⁹³dwelling, whither we had gone impelled by hunger. The virago, although occupied ⁵⁷⁴in providing us with bananas and other food, described the affair to our men without either gesture or emotion, indeed, just as if the matter under consideration was an occurrence of the most ordinary kind. Whilst I was making a crayon sketch of the Amazon, my host, whose acquaintance with surgery equalled that of the best surgeons, soaked his cotton handkerchief in rum, sprinkled it with salt, and wrapped it round the head of the Ticuna, who was lying in his hammock burning with fever. I have no knowledge of what followed.

On the same day I purchased of a hideous, old, black, bent, wrinkled, and withered ²³¹Ticuna woman, who was almost naked, a little tapir that she had reared, and who ⁴³⁵whistled more shrilly than a post-boy. The price I paid was a necklace of yellow glass ¹³⁶beads which the old woman put round her neck with a hideous grimace of coquetry. My pachydermatous acquisition, about the size of a pig six months old, had not yet acquired its permanent coat; instead of the soot-coloured hair which characterizes the adult tapirs, the coat of this one was striped longitudinally with black, gray, and yellow; from the regularity of these stripes and the brilliancy of their colours it appeared as if the animal was clothed with a garment of striped calico.

After a few hours we became inseparable; it was a good-natured little animal, ⁰⁰⁰soft, humble, and caressing, and always ready to testify its gratitude to anyone who would tickle its belly. Its only fault was that it persisted in slobbering over my boots and loosening the strings; but this, if it could be called a fault, was compensated by so many good qualities that I willingly tolerated it. This gentle travelling companion was snatched from my arms by one of the inflexible Parcae, after a month's acquaintance; when he died within sight of the lake Ega I was occupied with the toilet preparations necessary for my approaching visit to the authorities of the place, and having no time to save the animal's skin for scientific purposes, I threw him with all his decorations into the Amazon, breathing a prayer that the caymans might spare his remains.

On quitting the black waters and splendid forests of the interior the Amazon and ¹³⁶its banks appeared to me dull of colour and outline; but Loreto, in particular, struck me as hideous. The chiques and mosquitoes, which I there found more lively and more abundant than ever, still further increased the aversion with which this village had inspired me at first sight.

I have always suspected, with or without reason, that the nine species of mosquitoes that are met with on the Amazon, and which I will name on a future page, have made Loreto, if not the capital of their kingdom, at least the centre of their operations, and the theatre of their greatest exploits. Nowhere, in fact, has the audacity of these winged brigands appeared to me greater, their buzzing more ironical, their bite sharper, their poison more corrosive, or the wound they inflict slower in cicatrizing. The fowls, the ducks, the pigeons, the hoccoes, the paxxis, and the agamias; which at Loreto are the messmates of man and form his poultry-yard, would hasten to second my proposition,